

Air Force jet crashes close to residential subdivision

□ The crash killed all eight people on board while trying to land at an airport in Alabama.

ALEXANDER CITY, Ala. (AP) — An Air Force jet headed for Texas crashed Monday in a wooded area while trying to land at the airport in this eastern Alabama town. All eight people on board were killed. Fire Chief Ronnie Betts said there were multiple casualties but would not say how many. CNN said all eight people on board the jet were killed. The plane was trying to make an unplanned landing at the Alexander City airport

when it crashed near a subdivision 4 miles from Alexander City, said Lt. Frances Sconi, a spokeswoman for Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

The plane had been en route to Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, said Lt. Col. Johnny Whitaker, a spokesman for Randolph.

He said the jet, which had taken off from Andrews, was based in Randolph and was carrying a crew of two and six passengers.

A Pentagon official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press that both military and civilian personnel were aboard the plane.

The plane did not appear to strike any homes when it went down around 6:30 p.m.

"It sounded like an earth-

quake when it came over our house," resident Miranda Wyckoff told the Alexander City Outlook.

Wyckoff said she heard three explosions, including one as the jet plunged to the ground.

Betts said the plane broke into pieces.

"Not much is intact," he said.

Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Bacon in Washington said the plane was a C-21, a military version of the Learjet executive aircraft.

Alexander City is a textile-based community of 15,000 about 40 miles northeast of Montgomery. Russell Corp., a nationally known manufacturer of athletic uniforms, is headquartered in the town and is the leading employer.

Nations debate decision on nuclear future

□ Discussion has centered around peaceful nuclear technology in renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The world's nations Monday opened a month-long debate over renewing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the flawed but vital centerpiece of global arms control.

The United States and other nuclear powers want an indefinite and unconditional extension of the 25-year-old treaty, designed to block the spread of atomic arms.

But some in the Third World prefer periodic short-term extensions, tied to concrete progress toward general nuclear disarmament.

Opening the conference, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali sidestepped the issue of indefinite-vs.-limited extension, but urged the nuclear powers to move toward eventual elimination of nuclear arms.

"No more testing. No more production. ... Reduction and destruction of all nuclear weapons and the means to make them should be humanity's great common cause," the U.N. chief declared in the prepared text of his address.

The nuclear-weapons states are progressing slowly toward a comprehensive treaty banning nuclear tests, and are planning negotiations to cut off production of bomb material.

Boutros-Ghali also called on the nuclear powers to strengthen the limited assurances they have given non-nuclear weapons states that they will not be subject to nuclear attack.

The first day's agenda also included addresses by Secretary of State Warren Christopher and by Hans Blix, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which administers the treaty.

The 178 signatory governments are committed to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons beyond five nations that acknowledge having them — the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China.

The treaty also guaranteed nations the right to develop peaceful nuclear technology under international oversight.

The treaty is credited with

lessening the likelihood of a nuclear free-for-all in the world.

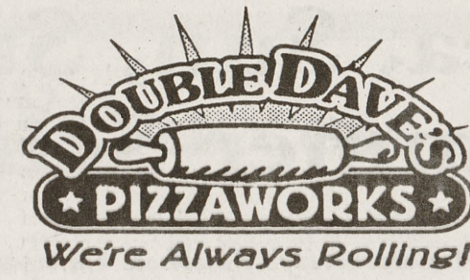
But its failures are well-known: Three nations that did not sign it — Israel, India and Pakistan — have developed nuclear-weapons capability. Two that did sign — Iraq and North Korea — are suspected of having tried to build nuclear bombs.

Many non-nuclear nations complain, too, that the five nuclear weapons states have balked at meeting the treaty's "Article VI" commitment — to move in good faith toward total disarmament.

The treaty had only a 25-year guaranteed run. The pact itself specified that in 1995 the signatories would have to decide whether to extend it indefinitely, or for a fixed period or periods.

Some in the Third World want to renew it for only a limited term, and to tie later extensions to further progress in reducing nuclear arsenals, completion of a nuclear test-ban treaty or other conditions.

The dispute between those who have weapons and those who don't is reflected in a still-unresolved debate over procedures to use when the extension question comes to a vote in early May.



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